

## Message Text

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 01 SEOUL 02937 260601Z

20

ACTION SS-25

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 NSCE-00 SSO-00 /026 W

----- 057096

R 260534Z APR 75

FM AMEMBASSY SEOUL

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 9713

C O N F I D E N T I A L SEOUL 2937

EXDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINS, PINT, KS

SUBJECT: FATHER SINNOTT CASE

REF: (A) SEOUL 2935 '74864\$08)-53 096410

1. REFTEL NOTED THAT, AT REQUEST OF FATHER SINNOTT, WE HAD APPROACHED PRIMIN'S OFFICE AND FONMIN TO SEEK EXTENSION OF RESIDENCE PERMIT. EVENING OF APRIL 25 WE PASSED ALONG TO SINNOTT SUGGESTION FROM FONMIN THAT EXTENSION OF RESIDENCE PERMIT WOULD BE FACILITATED BY STATEMENT "PLEDGING NOT TO VIOLATE KOREAN LAW." FATHER SINNOTT TOLD US HE MIGHT SIGN STATEMENT TO THE EFFECT THAT "GUIDED BY HIS CONSCIENCE AND HIS SUPERIORS, HE WOULD OBEY KOREAN LAWS." AMBASSADOR TRANSMITTED THIS LANGUAGE TO FONMIN LATE EVENING APRIL 25. WHILE PREFERRING MORE DIRECT LANGUAGE, FONMIN AND PRIMIN EARLY MORNING APRIL 26 INFORMED AMBASSADOR THAT SUCH STATEMENT WOULD PAVE WAY FOR EXTENSION, GIVEN BROADER IMPACT OF SINNOTT CASE. FONMIN POINTED OUT PROBLEM OF CONVINCING JUSTICE MINISTER COMPOUNDED BY SINNOTT PRESS CONFERENCE (BELOW).

2. ON MORNING OF APRIL 26, FATHER SINNOTT INFORMED POLCOUNS THAT HE HAD THOUGHT MATTER OVER AND HAD DECIDED THAT HE COULD SIGN NO STATEMENT PLEDGING TO OBSERVE KOREAN LAW, NO MATTER HOW QUALIFIED. HE SAID HE ALREADY KNEW THERE WERE SOME KOREAN LAWS HE COULD NOT

CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 02 SEOUL 02937 260601Z

OBEY AND THAT THERE WERE PEOPLE IN PRISON WHOSE

CONSCIENCE HAD LED THEM TO VIOLATE SUCH LAWS. FATHER SINNOTT THANKED EMBASSY FOR ITS ASSISTANCE ON HIS BEHALF, AND ASKED FOR NO FURTHER AID.

3. AMBASSADOR INFORMED FONMIN OF FATHER SINNOTT'S DECISION MORNING OF APRIL 26; FONMIN REPLIED THAT NOTHING FURTHER POSSIBLE UNDER THESE CIRCUMSTANCES.

4. EVENING OF APRIL 25, MINISTER OF TRANSPORTATION CHOE AND EPB MINISTER NAM SEPARATELY GAVE AMBASSADOR ACCOUNT OF DISCUSSION OF SINNOTT CASE AT CABINET MEETING THAT DAY. THEY SAID DECISION ON DEPARTURE ORDER HAD BEEN MADE UNILATERALLY BY MINISTER OF JUSTICE AND ANNOUNCED BY HIM AT CABINET MEETING TO SURPRISE OF PRIMIN AND FONMIN. JUSTICE MINISTER ARGUED THAT KOREA WAS SOVEREIGN COUNTRY AND THAT RESIDENT FOREIGNERS HAD TO OBEY ITS LAWS. ACCORDING TO NAM, (AND CONFIRMED BY CHOE) HE, FONMIN AND CHOE ARGUED AGAINST DEPARTURE ORDER. NAM COMMENTED TO AMBASSADOR THAT "HAWKS" IN CABINET DID NOT UNDERSTAND BROADER IMPLICATIONS OF THEIR SHORT-SIGHTED ACTIONS. PRIMIN TOOK NO POSITION ON ISSUE DURING CABINET MEETING BUT AUTHORIZED FONMIN TO TRY TO WORK OUT SOLUTION WITH SINNOTT.

5. APRIL 21 MORNING PRESS CARRIED STORIES ABOUT DEPARTURE ORDER AND ALSO COVERED PRESS CONFERENCE" WHICH FATHER SINNOTT STATED PREVIOUS EVENING IN

MYONGDONG CATHEDRAL. CHOSON ILBO QUOTES FATHER SAYING THAT "AFTER I RECEIVED DEPARTURE ORDER, I ASKED THE AMERICAN EMBASSY TO ASSIST IN MAKING IT POSSIBLE FOR ME TO CONTINUE TO STAY, BUT IT LOOKS

IMPOSSIBLE." PRESS ALSO REPORTS SINNOTT AS DENYING THAT HE HAD ENGAGED IN POLITICAL ACTIVITIES.

6. FOR TIME BEING, WE INTEND TO REPLY TO ANY PRESS INQUIRIES ALONG LINES REF (B), SAYING WE ARE CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 03 SEOUL 02937 260601Z

OBTAINING INFORMATION FROM THE PRESS IS OBVIOUSLY AWARE OF CASE BUT HAVE NO COMMENT AT PRESENT TIME.

7. COMMENT: GPDEN IRRECONCILABLE POSITION OF HARDLINE "HAWKS" IN ROKG AND FATHER SINNOTT, WHO - AS EVIDENCED BY HIS ACTIONS INCLUDING PRE-PRESIDENTIAL VISIT DEMONSTRATIONS AT EMBASSY - HAS BEEN MOST MILITANT AMONG MISSIONARIES, IT PROVED IMPOSSIBLE TO WORK

OUT BASIS FOR EXTENSION OF RESIDENCE PERMIT.  
RECOGNIZING BROADER STAKES, PRIMIN AND FONMIN MADE  
EARNEST EFFORT WHICH FAILED IN END. FATHER SINNOTT  
APPARENTLY DECIDED HE PREFERRED TO LEAVE KOREA  
RATHER THAN MAKE ANY CONCESSION TO KOREAN LAW. CHOICE  
WAS ENTIRELY HIS (AS WAS THE REQUEST THAT WE WERE  
REVERSAL OF DEPARTURE ORDER) AND WE MADE NO EFFORT  
TO INFLUENCE HIM.  
SNEIDER

CONFIDENTIAL

NNN

## Message Attributes

**Automatic Decaptioning:** Z  
**Capture Date:** 01 JAN 1994  
**Channel Indicators:** n/a  
**Current Classification:** UNCLASSIFIED  
**Concepts:** POLICIES, RELIGIOUS LEADERS, IMMIGRATION LAW, PRESS CONFERENCES  
**Control Number:** n/a  
**Copy:** SINGLE  
**Draft Date:** 26 APR 1975  
**Decaption Date:** 28 MAY 2004  
**Decaption Note:** 25 YEAR REVIEW  
**Disposition Action:** RELEASED  
**Disposition Approved on Date:**  
**Disposition Authority:** KelleyW0  
**Disposition Case Number:** n/a  
**Disposition Comment:** 25 YEAR REVIEW  
**Disposition Date:** 28 MAY 2004  
**Disposition Event:**  
**Disposition History:** n/a  
**Disposition Reason:**  
**Disposition Remarks:**  
**Document Number:** 1975SEOUL02937  
**Document Source:** CORE  
**Document Unique ID:** 00  
**Drafter:** n/a  
**Enclosure:** n/a  
**Executive Order:** GS  
**Errors:** N/A  
**Film Number:** D750147-0059  
**From:** SEOUL  
**Handling Restrictions:** n/a  
**Image Path:**  
**ISecure:** 1  
**Legacy Key:** link1975/newtext/t19750413/aaaaalux.tel  
**Line Count:** 124  
**Locator:** TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM  
**Office:** ACTION SS  
**Original Classification:** CONFIDENTIAL  
**Original Handling Restrictions:** EXDIS  
**Original Previous Classification:** n/a  
**Original Previous Handling Restrictions:** n/a  
**Page Count:** 3  
**Previous Channel Indicators:** n/a  
**Previous Classification:** CONFIDENTIAL  
**Previous Handling Restrictions:** EXDIS  
**Reference:** 75 SEOUL 2935, 75 '74864\$053, 75 096410  
**Review Action:** RELEASED, APPROVED  
**Review Authority:** KelleyW0  
**Review Comment:** n/a  
**Review Content Flags:**  
**Review Date:** 16 JUL 2003  
**Review Event:**  
**Review Exemptions:** n/a  
**Review History:** RELEASED <16 JUL 2003 by ShawDG>; APPROVED <18 NOV 2003 by KelleyW0>  
**Review Markings:**

Margaret P. Grafeld  
Declassified/Released  
US Department of State  
EO Systematic Review  
05 JUL 2006

**Review Media Identifier:**  
**Review Referrals:** n/a  
**Review Release Date:** n/a  
**Review Release Event:** n/a  
**Review Transfer Date:**  
**Review Withdrawn Fields:** n/a  
**Secure:** OPEN  
**Status:** NATIVE  
**Subject:** FATHER SINNOTT CASE  
**TAGS:** PINS, PINT, KS, (SINNOT, JAMES)  
**To:** STATE  
**Type:** TE  
**Markings:** Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 05 JUL 2006